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**MAANDOOKYA**



# MAANDOOKYA

## THE UPANISHAD OF UPANISHADS

A MODERN RENDERING AND A MODERN INTERPRETATION

**K.S. Rangappa & L.B. Ahuja**



**Paanchajanya**  
**Mysore - India**

Maandookya Upanishad -  
A Modern Rendering and a Modern Interpretation by  
Dr. K.S. Rangappa & L.B. Ahuja

Published by PAANCHAJANYA

82, First Stage Industrial Suburb, Mysore South - 570 008  
India

First Published 1997

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**This book is published with the financial assistance of  
Thirumala Devasthanam under their scheme of Aid to  
Publish Religious books**

Prabodha Printing & Publishing House  
Basaveshwara Road  
Mysore 570 004

# THE CHOICE

## (Maandookya, the Upanishad of Upanishads)

The Maandookya Upanishad, unlike most other Upanishads, plunges business-like directly into the exposition of the philosophy it has set out to expound without cocooning its substance in a Mythical story or an imaginary dialogue. And in this questioning age of keen reasoning we can hardly do better.

Perhaps the most concise of upnishads, Maandookya is an inspired insight unmatched in the adventures of the probing intellect of homo sapiens. In its search for Truth, nothing short of a divine flash could have stretched out, as in this Upanishad, to the totality of human experience instead of confining itself to the truncated patch of mere waking experience, as all thinkers and giants of science have been doing through the ages to this day. As if this weren't enough, the mastermind has sought out the chant, *AUM*, invariably used in all Hindu rituals, shelled the pod, labelled the seeds, breathed meaning, significance and symbolism into each seed and recomposed them into a single whole - the inherent divinity of deathless Light. In the necklace of Upanishad - pearls Mandookya, the bright pendant is enough for enlightenment of the seeker.

In this presentation of Maandookya, each mantra of the Upanishad is rendered first into English. The rendering aims primarily to translate the spiritual intent and implication, and only next, semantic faithfulness to the original.

The interpretation, which follows the rendering, while giving respectful weight to Gaudapada's *Karika* and Shankara's commentary on it, does not claim adherence to them. Our interpretation and explanation are sought to be based on the

totality of ubiquitous human experience. As such no scriptural prop has been resorted to. For the same reason we believe none is needed by the reader for understanding the fresh presentation - provided he comes to it with a virgin mind and checks every deduction and statement with his own experience. For corroboration with irrefutable experience is the ultimate proof of logically arrived conclusion. Here we may remind ourselves that Shankara, the invincible logician, warns against raising the philosophic edifice on vicarious experience and conclusions, however eminent the authority. Conclusions derived from exceptionless self-experience would naturally bear the stamp of Universality. Conviction born of reasoned probe is likely to root deeper and prove more faithful and durable than faith grafted from sources foreign to oneself.

Mysore,  
October, 1997

**K. S. Rangappa**  
**L.B. Ahuja**

## FOREWORD

The *Maandukya* is counted amongst the principal Upanishads, though in its size it is perhaps the smallest, comprising only twelve mantras. Its importance is unique in that it speaks to us invitingly about our own secret truth of *being* along with the integral truth of cosmic Reality and the supreme Truth of the Absolute Reality, and thus subtly leads our consciousness into identity with the Supreme Reality, significantly called "OM". Also spelt as *A-U-M*. Presumably for this importance the authors of its "Modern Rendering and Modern Interpretation", Shri K.S. Rangappa and Shri L.B.Ahuja, appreciate it as "The Upanishad of Upanishads".

The Upanishad announces at the very outset that 'OM' the Imperishable Word, is the Supreme Reality, both in its ultimate essence and also its cosmic manifestation in ceaseless Time, including all that was and is and will be in the world-creation. It purports to effectively arouse in us the awareness of the truth of our own spiritual Self to be the same identical OM in its fourfold poise of Consciousness.

This fourfold poise of the Self is typified in experiential terms, viz., the waking, '*jagarita*', the dreaming, '*svapna*', the deep slumber, '*susupti*', and the superconscient fourth, '*turiya*'. Each one of the these poises is a poise of essential consciousness, '*prajna*', Wisdom, characterised respectively as outward Wisdom, inward Wisdom, Wisdom per se, self-contained, self-existent. Consciousness and the transcendent Wisdom of the Absolute, the supreme nondual Self Gnosis is beyond all predications.

It is the last, the fourth poise of the Absolute Consciousness which verily is the singly composite syllable 'OM', itself triply syllabled as '*A-U-M*', in which and of each syllable is

integrally one with the composite whole and everyone is a measure of the Supreme Reality.

The signification of the triple syllable 'A-U-M' is explicated by the Upanishad respectively in terms of successive measures of the Supreme as Creative Consciousness, *Prajna*. First, wakefully poised is the *Vaisvanara*, the Universal Male, represented by the syllable 'A' which is the initial and the all pervasive sound. The second is the dream-poised *Taijas*, the Luminous, represented by the syllable 'U', signifying rising and advancing and centrally common to all sounds. The third is the sleep-poised Lord of Wisdom, *Prajñā*, represented by the sonant 'M', signifying measure and finality of sounds. Consistently, the measureless, non sonant, soundless is the transcendent Poise, the '*turiyā*', Incommunicable, That in which is the cessation of all phenomena, the other-less One, the Supreme Good, 'Śivo'dvaita'. Thus is 'OM' the Self Itself.

The Upanishad not only speaks of what the composite syllable 'A-U-M' stands for and the Reality and its measures signified by each sonant, it also assures what spiritual realisations one would attain by becoming conscious of the mystic truths of the component sonants of the single syllable 'OM'. The knower of the waking Poise, *Vaisvanara*, signified by the sonant 'A', attains all that he longs for and becomes the source of inspiration; the knower of the Dream-Poise, *Taijas*, signified by the sonant 'U' attains to advancement of knowledge and enhances the heritage of Wisdom of Brahman to further generations. He who knows the Sleep-Poise, the *Prajan*, signified by the sonant 'M', measures all this existence with himself and attains to the final entry into the Eternal. He who knows Him in the fourth Poise, the Supreme, really knows Him and enters by his self into the Self.

Shri Rangappa and Shri Ahuja have expressly chosen the



Maandukya Upanishad, in full praise for its merits, for rendering and interpreting it for the modern mind. They have dealt with each of the twelve mantras of the Upanishad, as if a theme by itself, in consistent development with the entire text, bringing out the whole message and its spiritual teaching. This they have done with faithfulness, close study, clarity and consistency which they feel to be of logical merit. The whole treatment is marked out by something like a psycho-spiritual philosophy leaning on Advaita. Their work speaks of both labour and inspiration and it will be of interest to not only the modern mind but also to those having a grounding in Indian spiritual tradition. One deserves to see that the Upanishadic Wisdom has its great value because of the intrinsic truth it carries, irrespective of idiosyncratic appeal, modern or traditional.

The language of the Māṇḍūkya Upanishad is straight and packed and enunciative, communicating spiritual truths in experiential and convincing terms. To get at these truths through mind's appropriate ideas is quite normal to man's intellect, perhaps necessary and appealing to the modern man. But the Upanishads are nothing less than Upanishads and the intimate spiritual truths are to be intimately realised. The Maandukya speaks to us, the seekers of Self, not only enunciatively and convincingly but also assuringly, inviting and preparing us for possible realisations for which alone a philosophical systematisation is meant to serve some purpose.

May 'OM' become a living realisation in its integrality as the Mandukya declares it, whatever its conceptual value in this or that philosophical scheme!

April 7, 1995

H MAHESWARI  
Sri Aurobindo Ashram  
Pondicherry

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

We are specially thankful to the authorities of Thirumala Thirupathi Devasthanams for generous grant for the Publication of this work.

We appreciate very much the Meticulous care and devotion of Shri. M. N. Bheemesh and his team of Prabodha Printing and Publishing House in the Production of this volume.

**Paanchajanya**

## Scheme of Transliteration and Pronunciation of Sanskrit Words

Sanskrit	Italics with (romans w/o) diacritics.		Pronounced as in
अ	a	[a]	come
आ	ā	[aa]	far
इ	i	[i]	pin
ई	ī	[ee]	feel
उ	u	[u]	full
ऊ	ū	[oo]	cool
ऋ	r̄	[rri]	ring
ए	e	[e]	cake
ऐ	ai	[ae]	mite
ओ	o	[o]	note
औ	au	[ou]	count
अं	m̄	[am]	some
अः	h̄	[ah]	soft half 'h'
क्	k	[K]	Kite
ख्	kh	[kh]	silk-hat (uttered together)
ग	g	[g]	go
घ	gh	[gh]	log-hut
ङ	ṅ		sing
च	c	[ch]	church
छ	ch	[chh]	church-hill
ज	j	[j]	jug
झ	jh	[jh]	hedge hog
ञ	ñ		fringe
ट	t̄	[t]	curt

Sanskrit	Italics with (romans w/o) diacritics.		Pronounced as in
ठ	ṭh	[th]	hot <u>h</u> ouse
ड	ḍ	[d]	bird <u>ḍ</u>
ढ	ḍh	[dh]	red <u>h</u> ot
ण	ṇ		bond (cerebral)
त	t	[t]	't' soft a sin (French)
थ	th	[th]	<u>th</u> under
द	d	[d]	<u>th</u> ough
ध	dh	[dh]	breathe <u>h</u> -hard
न	n	[n]	pen <u>n</u>
प	p	[p]	<u>p</u> un
फ	ph	[ph]	top <u>h</u> -hat
ब	b	[b]	<u>b</u> ut
भ	bh	[bh]	ab <u>h</u> or
म	m	[m]	<u>m</u> other
य	y	[y]	<u>y</u> oung
र	r	[r]	<u>r</u> est
ल	l	[l]	<u>l</u> ump
व	v	[v.w]	<u>v</u> ault
श	s'	[sh]	<u>sh</u> ip (palatal's)
ष	ṣ	[sh]	<u>sh</u> ould
स	s	[s]	sun
ह	h	[h]	home
क्ष	ks	[khy]	
ज्ञ	jñ	[gy]	
(९)	(. ) Symbol denoting elision of a or aa when <i>sandhi</i> takes place.		

Compound Sanskrit letters श्र, श्ल, श्व, श्र, श्र  
Italics sra, sla, sva, sca, sna

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## INVOCATION

To listen to Maandookya

Is to invite divine promise;

To study Maandookya

Is to drink nectar - *Aum*;

To assimilate *Aum*

Is to climb the summit,

Ever bright, serene, blissful.

# **FIRST MANTRA**

ओमित्येतदक्षरमिदं सर्वं तस्योपव्याख्यानं  
 भूतं भवद्भविष्यदिति सर्वमोङ्कार एव ।  
 यच्चान्यत् त्रिकालातीतं तदप्योङ्कार एव ॥१॥

*Aumityetadaksramidam sarvam  
 tasyopavyākhyānam bhutam  
 bhavadbhavisyaditi sarvam onkāra  
 eva; yaccānyat trikalatītam  
 tadapyonkāra eva.*



# MAANDOOKYA UPANISHAD

## First Mantra

I      Aum<sup>1</sup>, this sonant, is imperishable<sup>2</sup>;  
       All this <sup>3</sup>, its near-expression<sup>4</sup>,  
       Past, present, future<sup>5</sup> - -  
       All are Aumkaara<sup>6</sup> itself;  
       And else<sup>7</sup> beyond the trio<sup>8</sup>  
       Is Aumkaara too.

1. Aum - - Spiritual chant (pronounced 'Om') used universally in Hinduism.
2. Imperishable - - *akṣaram* in the original. This word in Sanskrit stands for indestructible, unalterable, a letter, a word, a sound, a vowel and the syllable "Om" (ॐ).
3. All this - - All the perceivable world.
4. Near - expression - - Limited manifestation of Aum.
5. Past, present, future - - The gamut of all experiences and happenings.
6. Aumkaara - - The term for intoned Aum.
7. And else - - Everything else which survives all.
8. Beyond the trio - - Beyond the experience of the phenomenal world in time and space, as well as beyond thought and imagination.

Commonly the words in this mantra are grouped in Sanskrit, as follows :

"aum iti etat aksaram  
 idam sarvam tasya upavyākhyānam  
 bhūtam bhavadbhaviṣyat iti sarvam oṅkāra eva  
 yat cca anyat trikalātitaṁ  
 tat api oṅkāra eva."

As per this arrangement, the rendering in English would be :

Called Aum, this word is all this.

Its elucidation :

Past, present, future - -

All are Aumkaara itself.

And also beyond the three spans,  
 is Aumkaara too.

Considering the fact that the Upanishadic form of enunciation is the most crystallised and pithiest manner of expression of human thought, the expression, "its elucidation" appears superfluous.

Similarly, to interpret akṣaram superficially as "word", is to rob it of its due and profound meaning, apart from avoidably pointing to the obvious, that Aum (ॐ) is a word. In the context here and of the whole of the Upanishad, it would be more appropriate to interpret it as a-ksaram, the undying, imperishable, invariant Principle.

With regrouping of the words, as given below, the mantra should be able to avoid redundancy and convey more fully the meaning built into it.

*"Aum iti etat akṣaram idaṁ sarvaṁ  
 tasya upavyākhyānam  
 bhūtaṁ bhavadbhaviṣyat iti sarvaṁ oṅkāra eva  
 yat ca anyat trikālātītam  
 tat api oṅkāra eva."*

*Aum iti* -- Universally known and chanted as Aum.

*etat* - - This (Aum)

*akasaram* (a-ksaram) - - Undecaying, imperishable.

*idaṁ sarvaṁ* - - All of this

*tasya* - - of Aum

*upavyākhyānam* (upa-vyākhyānam) - - Near, close or approximate explanation.

(The rest of the mantra remains as before).

This part of the mantra, with words regrouped thus and interpreted in this manner would in general state as follows :

This, the perceivable, ever-changing, perishable phenomenal world, when viewed as the involuted Aum, is indeed imperishable.

The evolution or unfurling of the phenomenal world in the states of waking and dream, and its involution or furling into ONE and only ONE in the state of dreamless sleep, and the identity of Aum with the Atman, the indivisible, imperishable, will be enunciated later in the Upanishad.

Aum, like any other vocalisation, is a particular combination of selected vowels and consonant. This understanding is essential for an objective approach to this Upanishad which arrives at the concept of ultimate Reality with a rigorous logic.

Here it would be helpful - - perhaps necessary - - to recognise at the outset the crucial distinction between "Reality" of Vedanta (as of philosophy in general), which is immutable (and therefore everlasting) and the "reality" of daily parlance. In common usage "reality" is all that is perceptible by one or more of the five senses and therefore by the mind. This applies to both objects and feelings. And this reality, sadly, is the inescapable victim of the tyranny of change - - birth, growth, decay and death. Absolute Reality, in contrast, is meant to connote that which is delightfully beyond the reach of the freezing hand of change. In order to be precise and clear and to obviate needless confusion, we have opted for terms, *seeming reality*, *apparent reality*, *appearance* and such equivalents to indicate the ephemeral, perceived, so-called reality of daily life. We have reserved the word "Reality" (with capital R) to signify the invariant ultimate Principle, which philosophy (and science) is after.

The word *upavyākhyānam* is generally taken to mean, "clear explanation." Both semantically and contextually, however, *upa-vyākhyānam*, seems to signify something, both different and deeper. The word, *upa*, for instance in 'upanishad', means close and near. This meaning is particularly apt, when the nature of Reality is taken into account. When it is realized that Reality is *anirvacanīyam*; that is, indescribable, it will be clear, no verbal explanation (including what follows in this Upanishad) can do justice to it. It has therefore necessarily got to be a mere, *upa*, an approximation. As such Aum can be but a close pointer to Reality, verily a mere signpost.

In this mantra, the line : "And else, beyond the trio," calls for elaboration. If the earlier line, 'Past, present, future - -' cryptically covers all the activity of waking consciousness, this line comprehends the experience of dream-consciousness as

them too. "Whatever else" is not a verbal excess, since it includes the domains of thinking, imagination and fantasy, too.

Aum here is being referred to, without exception, to the totality of life's experience - - of the cognizable universe as well as the inexpressible yet undeniable experience that life invariably goes through during sleep, when the mind (waking consciousness and dream consciousness) is non-functional, and beyond. And Aum's reach, indicates the mantra, goes beyond the three states of experience, too.

In this comprehensive connotation, Aum it must be pointed out, is only a symbol, quite like the sculpted stone idol consecrated in a temple, taken by the faithful to represent the beneficent Supreme.

The methodology adopted in the Upanishad to elucidate the nature of Reality is worthy of note. Straightaway is enunciated succinctly the theorem, "Aum is all." It then proceeds step by step to prove it. This mantra defines the term, "all," and in the next continues its elaboration.



## **SECOND MANTRA**

सर्वं ह्येतद् ब्रह्मायमात्मा ब्रह्म,  
सो ऽ यमात्माचतुष्पात् ॥२॥

*Sarvam hyetad brahma  
ayamātmā brahma, so'yamātmā  
chatushpāt.*

## Second Mantra

II      All this is but Brahman<sup>1</sup>,  
           This atman is Brahman<sup>2</sup>,  
           And this Atman  
           Is of four quarters<sup>3</sup>.

1. All this is but Brahman - - All this around, which perceivable is Brahman only. Brahman is a class vedantic term to signify Reality.
2. This ātman is Brahman - - The guru, sitting as it were before the disciple, is pointing to himself and saying "Th ātman" is Brahman. By "*this ātman*" he refers to, for the time being, to his individual self.
3. And this Atman is of four quarters - - It follows from the above two statements that the Atman, which is Brahman (and therefore spelt here with capital A) is of four quarters.

A new term, Brahman, is being introduced in this mantra (This is quite different from Brahmaa, one of the Hindu Trinity). The magnum opus of Hindu philosophy, the Brahmasootras, is devoted to the exposition of Brahman, the universal, invariant Principle. Brahman, the ultimate Reality, is also denominated as *Kevala* (the Absolute), *parama* (the Supreme), the Atman (the SELF), and so on. The word atman in Sanskrit stands among others, for the individual self as well. For the purpose of clarity in these discussions, the word Atman (capital A) will be used for Reality.

The statement, "All this is but Brahman", it may be noted would follow as a corollary of the postulate of the first mantra - "Aum is all this." For if Aum, the sonant, is all-inclusive, automatically includes Brahman, the individual self, a



anything else you would name. In this is implicit the immateriality of name and form for the ultimate Truth. It signifies, too, that for him who sees the Light, all sounds are Aum, all perceptibles are Brahman, both of which stand for the invariant Principle, the Atman.

The *seeming* repetition and redundance involved in the assertion, "This ātman is Brahman", and the guru's selection of the individual self out of all that exists in the entire cosmos for naming it as Brahman, is the point of take-off for establishing logically, the classical Vedantic enunciation of Reality "(aham brahmāsmi), I am Brahman", and "Everything is Brahman, (sarvam khalu idam brahma)," which the guru is going to expand and prove to the seeker. The Upanishad here states that the experience of "I" is far more than the feel of the limited ego. The experience of "I" indeed comprehends the cosmos, states the mantra.

The enormous significance built into the word, "this", by the guru needs to be elaborated here. By reference to himself as this, the guru is not referring to his body-mind complex. He means the existence which each and every creature experiences *intuitively* at all times. And that the universal awareness of existence, the guru implies, is undeniable, self-evident, and needs no proof. It is THAT awareness of existence, which the guru means by the term "this", the Atman.

The Sanskrit term "*pāda*", is a word of multiple meanings. It stands for foot, step, part, quarter as well as destination. The physical, mental and supramental experiences of an individual are sought to be categorised as made up of four seemingly distinct parts. Not that the Atman, which comprises them all, is so divisible. It is like considering indivisible space in terms of east, west, south and north -- only for the sake of

of life as made up of physical and mental components, the synergetic combination of which yields something more than the mere addition of the two.

In the subsequent mantras the different types of experiences are identified and classified for purposes of analysis and inference for a full and precise understanding of the true nature of Brahman.



## **THIRD MANTRA**

जागरितस्थानो बहिष्प्रज्ञः सप्ताङ्ग  
 एकोनविंशतिमुखः स्थूलभुग्वैश्वानरः  
 प्रथमः पादः ॥३॥

*jāgaritasthāno bahisprajñah*  
*saptānga ekonavimsatimukhah*  
*sthūlabhugvaiśvānarah prathama*  
*pādah*

## Third Mantra

III      The waking state its sphere<sup>1</sup>;  
           Conscious of outer world<sup>2</sup>,  
           With parts seven,  
           Gateways nineteen,  
           Revelling in the gross<sup>3</sup>,  
           Vaishwānara<sup>4</sup> is the first quarter.

1.    The Waking state its sphere - - Having the state of waking for its domain.
2.    Outer World - - Objects other than itself.
3.    Revelling in the gross - - Indulging in experiences of the objective world.
4.    Vaishwanara - - The name given to the First quarter of "this Atman" (of the second mantra) as having the above features.

Having stated in the earlier mantra that this Atman (Brahman) is made up of four quarters, the demarcations between them and their distinctive features are now defined.

The first quarter or component or category of the Atman is the human experience which spans the waking state.

The waking state is made up of sensory perceptions of the waking consciousness, the actions, reactions and interactions (voluntary as well as involuntary), flowing from the ever-growing heap of perceptions, as distinct from the experiences of the dream-world. (Insubstantial experiences like hysteria, hallucination and lunacy can all be classed for the purpose of this philosophical discussion with those of the dream-world without loss of generality and logical validity.)

The responses of waking consciousness (that is, of the waking mind) to the ceaseless stream of stimuli imply a rigid sense of separation of the perceiver from the perceived world. From this arises the inalienable conviction of an unbridgeable chasm between the Atman-Brahman and the objective world, and differentiation between the limited individual self (ātman-ego) with its sense of me and mine, and other differing similar ego-selves.

The first quarter is named Vaishwānara. Vaishwānara, the Upanishad says, is the enjoyer of the gross experience of the waking state. As the experiencer is the ātman-ego, Vaishwānara is indeed the *waking ego*. And the waking ego is being described as having seven parts and nineteen inlets.

The Chhandogya upanishad personifies the universe as Vaishwānara\*, with the firmament for its head, the sun for its eye, the air for life-breath, the space for its trunk, the ocean for its organ of exertion, the earth for its feet and Aahavaneeya (one of the sacrificial ritual fires) for its device of ingestion and assimilation.

The nineteen gateways of Vaishwānara for receiving information are the five organs of perception (sight, sound, smell, taste and touch), five organs of action (hands, feet and organs of speech, generation and evacuation), five vital airs (*prāna*-breath, *apāna*-rectal wind, *samāna*-digestive air, *udāna*-belching, yawning, sneezing and the last gasp, and *vyāna*-systemic air). These, together with four distinctive types of cerebrations - - reception of stimulus (*manas*), collection and comparison of experiences (*citta*), discrimination and decision-making (*buddhi*), and sense of individuality (*ahamkāra*), make up the tools of

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\* This image and its significance are elaborately portrayed in Chhandogya

consciousness for acquisition and application of information and gathering experience.

Clearly, the intent of the imaged resemblance between Vaishwānara and the universe is a step towards recognising the identity between the two.

The first place given to Vaishwānara, which experiences the waking state, has a certain justification. As Shankara points out, only the waking state can normally recall the experience of all the states, including those of dream and dreamless sleep, appraise and juxtapose the different types of experiences, and reason out its way to the ultimate Truth.

The prime ranking of Vaishwānara also fits in with several semantic meanings - - that which heads all creatures; that which comprehends all existence; that which enables the function of experiencing external stimuli.

On the mundane plane, we come across many a creative accomplishment - - like Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* and Kekule's hit of the ring structure of benzene - - during the free-wheeling states of night dreams and day dreams. Why, many a prophet has claimed for his religious faith divine revelation in his dreams. On this score, the validity of primacy to Vaishwānara (waking consciousness) may be questioned. But the facts only point to the rather thin line between waking and dream experiences, the philosophical implication of which Mandookya later reveals.

By and large, however, the priority and predominance assigned to Vaishwānara, the waking state, are largely warranted.

It is perhaps necessary and useful to realise the identity and extensive connotation of the terms "waking state," "waking experience," "waking consciousness" and "waking ego," with

Vaishwānara. The validity of this becomes clear when it is seen that the mind, the ego and the experience are simultaneous and inalienably associated with each other, like the sun, the sunlight and the clear sight of the environment.

This applies no less to *Tajasa*, the dream state, spelt out in the succeeding mantra.





## FOURTH MANTRA

स्वप्नस्थानोऽन्तः प्रज्ञः समाङ्ग  
 एकोनविंशतिमुखः प्रविविक्तभुवतैजसो  
 द्वितीयः पादः॥४॥

*Svapnasthāno'ntah prajñah*  
*saptariga ekonavimsatimukhah*  
*pravivriktabhuktaijaso divitiyah*  
*pādah.*

## Fourth Mantra

IV      The dream state, its sphere<sup>1</sup>,  
           Conscious of inner world',  
           With parts seven  
           Gateways nineteen<sup>3</sup>,  
           Revelling in airy shine  
           Of experience, subtle<sup>3</sup>,  
           Taijasa is the second quarter<sup>4</sup>.

1.    The dream state, its sphere - - Having the state of dream for its domain.
2.    inner world - - Judging only from the waking view-point, dream play is generally taken to be occurring inside the organism in contrast to be activity during wakefulness, which is taken to be happening outside the body.
3.    airy shine, of experience, subtle - - Unlike the universe of seemingly gross waking experience, the domain of dream experience, we realise (looking back from the waking state), is deceptively fallacious actuality, no more true and reliable than a movie run on an immovable screen.
4.    is the second quarter - - Taijasa, the name given to the second quarter of "this Atman," as having the above features.

The placement of Taijasa, the dream state, in the Upanishad, after the waking state is significant and has to be correctly appraised. "Second quarter" does not imply subordination or inferiority. It only denotes that the two states are next to each other.

Both Vaishwanara and Taijasa have parts seven and gateways nineteen and they both revel in their bodies. The

thrust of the Upanishad is to point up the equality in the logical status of the two states.

It may be stated as a fact that dream is founded on the experiences in the waking state. It is inevitably the child, albeit distorted, of waking experience. No waking experience, no dream. Sensations garnered during waking hours are churned up to concoct the bizarre dream world. Dream never presents an experience beyond the ingredients of the waking-experience or of the waking-imagination. For example, an English child brought up on Christian love, dreams of Santa Claus, but not of the flying Hanuman of Hindu mythology, of which he has never heard. And the converse is equally true of the Hindu child. Similarly a tropical inhabitant, altogether a stranger to the arctics, does not dream of an igloo or a polar bear, while the Eskimo does not dream, for the same reason, of the sizzling thirst of midsummer drought or of a tiger.

It may here be argued that dream experience being totally dependent on waking experience, the dream state cannot be considered equal to the waking state. This negation, it must be noted, is being asserted only in the waking state. Were you discussing this subject in a dream - - as well you may - - then "the other" earlier waking state, would appear to have been the dream state. And on waking you may well be laughing at the interchange and amazing actuality of the dream while you were going through it.

Occasionally one goes through a dream within a dream. Such an experience, too, comes within the same logic and leads to the same conclusion.

Further, both waking and dream states have the common factors of subject , object and their mutual relationships.

Every response in the waking as well as in the dream state is the result of instincts and experiences.

Instincts like hunger and thirst do sometimes surface in the dream before they do in the waking state. This, however, does not contradict the fact of equality of status of the two states.

The common objection to equating dream with waking, however, is that "while dream is an altogether insubstantial, inconsequential, purposeless and fruitless experience, waking is totally contrary to it." The objection clearly arises from the fact that the dream is being judged in the waking state from the standpoint of the waking state. It has to be realized that during dreaming the "actuality" of experience is never in question. Every event in the dream, as in waking, *appears during* the experience as indubitably "real, rational and true."

Taijasa (dream experience) is *never* a present experience; for it appears, while it lasts, verily like Vaishwanara (waking experience) itself, without a shadow of a doubt. The realisation that an experience was "but a dreamy deception" dawns only in the succeeding waking state. The dream, as a dream, is *always* a post-experience, a past experience and *always* a hindsight. One invariably believes that one's present experience is positive waking. This at once casts doubt on "reality" of the so-called waking state, too. In other words, "waking" and "dream" are both either equally "real" or equally "unreal."

Thus is established the logical equality of the two states.

In the unending cyclic run of the three types of experience, ranking the states as the first, second and third would be obviously arbitrary and irrational. As the analysis of the subject, however, has to begin somewhere, the Upanishad takes it up from and in the state in which it is. And that state,

it names as Vaishwanara, and the succeeding one as Taijasa.

The crucial point to be grasped in this mantra is the concept of equality between Taijasa and Vaishwanara confidently put forth by the Upanishad. And the equation between the two, we shall see later, is as valid as it is vital for deriving reality.

### **The Fond Fallacy**

"Waking is waking  
And dream is dream,  
And the twain  
Are never-the same."  
Is a fallacy  
Fondly held,  
Like : The roving sun  
Daily rounds  
The constant earth.

Probing thought,  
Discontent with seeming sight,  
Dives to bottom truth :  
Kingdom of dream  
Though instant built,  
Instant lost  
Looks in dream-life  
So like wake  
As if from ever to ever.  
Hindsight, alert, awake,  
Wonders then  
If "wake" is indeed wake at all ?!  
If "reality", blind believed

Fallacy exposed,  
 Truth revealed,  
 Illumined thought  
 Settles firm on bedrock,  
 Shining below,  
 Speeding change,  
 To let dancing parades  
 Of wake and dream  
 Go smiling by.

The knowing wise one,  
 And the blind believer, both,  
 Though look and act  
 Like the commoner the same,  
 The faithful simple,  
 Always in the night,  
 Are pushed and pulled  
 Never knowing why;  
 The knower of truth  
 Walks in the Light  
 Ever calm, ever content:

## FIFTH MANTRA



यत्र सुप्तो न कञ्चन कामं कामयते,  
 न कञ्चन स्वपनं पश्यति, तत्  
 सुषुप्तम् । सुषुप्तस्थान एकीभूतः  
 प्रज्ञानधन एवानन्दमयः, ह्यानन्दभुक्  
 चेतोमुखः प्राज्ञस्तृतीयः पादः ॥५॥

*yatra suptono kañcana*

*kāmam kāmayaṭe, na Kañcana*

*svapanaṁ pasyati, tat*

*suṣuptam; suṣuptasthana*

*ekībhūtaḥ prājñānaghana*

*evānandamayah , hyanand-*

*bhuk, cetomukhah prājñah*

*tritiyaḥ pādaḥ.*

## Fifth Mantra

V      Where sleeper desires no desire at all;  
        Dreams no dream at all,  
        That is Sushupti<sup>1</sup>  
        The sphere of Sushupti,  
        Wherein all is unified<sup>2</sup>,  
        Verily consciousness congealed<sup>3</sup>,  
        Blissful<sup>4</sup>,  
        Enjoyer too,  
        Spring of all knowledge<sup>5</sup> - -  
        That Praagya<sup>6</sup> is the third quarter.

1. Sushupti - - Profound sleep, absence of consciousness, quiescence of mind, dreamless slumber.
2. unified - - All experience becomes one without consciousness of diversity.
3. congealed - - Both waking consciousness and dream consciousness are frozen to total inactivity.
4. Blissful - - Unbroken serenity "without a trace of infelicity" pervades.
5. all knowledge - - Information relating to external and internal worlds within the domain of mind born out of subject - object differentiation during waking and dream spells.
6. Praagya - - The name given to the all-pervasive, whole and sole experience which obtains in Sushupti.

Sense organs, perceptivity, mind as conglomerate and classifier of perceptions, intellect (digestor of gathered information and director) - - all being inactive, experience of deep

sleep is nature ally uncognisable, and therefore the experience is inexpressible. Yet, this mantra indicates, Sushupti is the experience of unalloyed intuitive awareness of the SELF (Brahman). This pure experience is in contrast to the intuitive awareness which is camouflaged by consciousness, in the waking and dream states, of a sense of multiplicity. The mantra adds, further, that the bliss, pure and total permeates this state. and that the triad of the enjoyer, the enjoyed and the act of enjoyment, herein involutes into unity. In other words, the knower, the known and the act of knowing - - subject, object and predicate - - merge into a single whole without a second. This unity, the mantra calls as Praagya.

There are people who swear that they have never known a sleep without dream. Evidently they do not realise that a sleep that is "known" - - like waking and dream wherein the mind is alert and active - - would no longer be deep sleep - - the "sleep of the dead." A mind-coginsable Sushupti is obviously a self-contradiction.

An unmistakable understanding of two major characteristics of Sushupti is a prerequisite for satisfactory grasp of the nature of the ultimate Truth expounded in Mandookya.

The first is : the total absence is Sushupti of the sense of separation of subject and object (ego and non-ego). This is a consequence of quiescence of the mind, the mechanism of sense and response which obtains in the states of waking and dream. The second is : despite the absence of the mind, and the indescribability of the experience, the state of deep sleep is not a state or an experience of void.

As the mind is still and non-functional deep sleep, one is inclined to jump to the conclusion that there is nothing to experience during the spell of immobility, or that deep sleep is the experience of nothingness. The fallacy of such a facile

deduction is exposed when we consider the stultifying consequence of such an experience.

Were Sushupti a void, each spell of deep sleep would snap the continuity of experience between every two wakings. That is, you would not be able to recall in the morning the happenings of the day before. In other words, memory would be impossible and, therefore, every sleep-break would spell a death and every waking would bell a new-birth. And in the absence of accumulated waking experience, there would be no memory, and there would be no dream experience either, for the memory of waking experience is the foundation of the dream world.

To realise that dreamless sleep cannot be an experience of void, however, is not to mean that you can place your finger on the "thing" you enjoy during Sushupti, the distinctive, third slice of experience; nor that you can identify the medium which carries memory forward through Sushupti from waking to waking or dream to dream.

By definition and by its very nature, deep sleep is the state of quiescence of the mind and therefore of absence of cognition of sensations. Being without them, Sushupti experience has necessarily to be beyond thought and expression - - *avarnanīyam*. And yet - - and this is crucial - - dreamless sleep is *not*, as we have seen, a state of nothingness.

The experience of indescribable Brahman in Sushupti is customarily indicated negatively as *neti, neti, neti*, "not this, not this, not this." This has to be so in as much as Sushupti is bereft of perceptible, concrete qualities. But yet the experience, it should be noted, does lend itself to definitive though abstract, indication. As we have seen, that which obtains in deep sleep is NOT nothing. Whatever it is that pervades Sushupti, though an unwordable experience of unrivalled

serenity, wrapped in blissful silence, it makes you on waking declare : "I slept a heavenly sleep". The positive nature of Sushupti is further affirmed by the ubiquitous need and craving for sound sleep by all living beings.

The precise and positive description would therefore be : Sushupti is that state where in the experience is indescribable but deducible abstractly as a positive experience in the succeeding waking state.



## SIXTH MANTRA

एष सर्वेश्वर एष सर्वज्ञः  
 एषोऽन्तर्यामी, एष योनिः सर्वस्य  
 प्रभवाप्ययौ हि भूतानाम् ॥६॥

*esa sarveśvara esa sarvajñah*  
*eso'ntaryāmī, esa yonih*  
*sarvasya prabhavāpyayau*  
*hi bhūtānām.*

## Sixth Mantra

VI      This<sup>1</sup>, the sovereign lord<sup>2</sup> of all, .  
           This, the all-knower<sup>3</sup>,  
           This, the inner governor<sup>4</sup>,  
           This, the womb of everything,  
           The source and sink<sup>5</sup>, too,  
           For all beings.

1.    This - - The sole, vital, primordial and immortal Principle, Praagya, which is experienced in its pristine state in Sushupti.
2.    sovereign lord - - Ruler supreme.
3.    all-knower - - That which knows all that is knowable, including the entrances, enactments and exits of all three states of experience.
4.    inner governor - - The director within.
5.    The source and sink - - The genesis as well as the end of all that exists.
6.    For all beings - - For each and all that was, is and will be.

The previous mantra has identified the attributes of the ubiquitous, immortal Principle behind the subjective system (the body-mind complex). The present mantra portrays the similarity between the same fundamental Principle and the external world.

"This," the Praagya of Sushupti, is now called *sarveśvara*, the overlord of all. True to the concentration of thought and meaning, characteristic of the upanishadic method, the word *sarveśvara* embodies here more than its mere general and surface meaning. It extends from the relationship at one end



of fear and obedience between master and servant, through respect and willing submission of the subject to the Lord, to the obsessive devotion of the devotee to his deity.

*Sarveśvara* has, in addition, built into it the vital significance, that He is the one and only Lord of all. And it would be perfectly justifiable, too, to read into it, that there is no intermediary either between the *sarveśvara* and beings all under his empire.

The term, *sarveśvara*, has to be taken as a sample and example of several synonymous names given to the Principle experienced in its natural, pristine, unalloyed state, *sahajasvabhāva* or *sahajasvarūpa*, in deep sleep. Other terms are the Atman, Brahman, Eeshvara, Paramaatmaa, the Absolute, the Supreme, the Reality, the Self and so on.

Similarly the term, *sarvajña*, the All-knower should be understood in its full and extensive meaning. His knowledge comprises among others, the knowledge and power needed to evolve, sustain and dissolve the cosmos as Sovereign Lord, and total comprehension of the inner and outer functioning of beings, making Him the perfect Inner Governor.

The question arises as to how beings, moved by the sovereign, all-knowing, perfect inner governor, come to be wicked or virtuous, and how such an almighty over all, permits "evils" and "inequalities" and blatant "injustices" in life. The logical answer seems to be the varied definitions and standards of 'wickedness' and 'virtues' formulated by beings, far less perfect and knowing than the all-knowing and all-powerful One, are not evidently the same. Hence the apparent incongruities and paradoxes.

As the All-knower, the sole Principle (the Atman) of

witness of the unceasing cyclic run of the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. And yet, without, being a participant in any of the states, the Atman is integral to, and the cause and the controller behind all that exists. It is not, however, as if it were a distinct, separate string, threading the triple states of experience. More exactly, it is the elemental gold in a jewel of the metal, regardless of the architecture and looks of the piece of jewellery.

The terms 'inner governor,' "womb" and "source and sink" make it evidently clear that "This is the birthplace, the living-place, as well as the death-place of the phenomenal universe, consciously experienced in the waking and dream states. Further, "This" is the master, too, that unfelt, invisibly directs every action and inaction of beings created by it. In other words, nothing imaginable comes into being, exists or dies outside "This."

As the emanating womb of everything, the Atman is that which is experienced inexpressibly, in its integrated singleness in Sushupti, when consciousness of subject - object differentiation is apparently furled into quiescence and which seems to unfurl itself, equally smoothly into the waking and dream worlds again and again in endless cycles.

Sushupti, in addition to being the treasure-chest of the three types of experience, embodies in itself the autonomous power and the will, too, to open and to close the chest. Hence Sushupti is the state of direct experience of the Atman and the Atman only.

The evidence, argument and conclusions in this upanishadic mantra are based upon the gamut of exceptionless experience of all living beings. In dreamless sleep, the subject, object and predicate, (sleeper, sleep-experience and the act of enjoyment of sleep), all involute into ONE simple, single

whole, the Atman, with nothing else beside Itself. The nature and significance of deep sleep, the third type of experience, thus reveals the fact that the positive experience obtaining in Sushupti is the unitary (advaitic) Principle, the power and potential of both waking and dream universes as well as of dreamless sleep in its pristine perfection (natural state, *sahaja swabhāva*).

This ONE, the Atman, seems (not really) to evolve by its own power and volition into the worlds of multiplicity of waking and dream with effortless spontaneity and with equal ease appears to curl back into its *sahaja swabhāva*, its natural state, of unity and felicity perfect. Here it should be explicitly noted that the Atman itself remains delightfully untouched by all the cycles of seeming changes. The quiescence, if not absence, of the mind and intellect in Sushupti naturally keeps the totality of Atman - experience beyond word and thought - - *anirvacanīyam* and *acintanīyam*.

This insight into the true nature of life - - as a ceaseless cycle of flowering and fading of mind - ridden multiplicity and mind-free unity - - it is note worthy, reflects the classic portrayal of the birth, growth and dissolution of the cosmos at the behest of the all-knowing, all-powerful Lord in Hindu mythology (and in many others too). Indeed it is hard to escape the realisation that the mythological scenario of the macrocosm is but a figurative representation by the inspired seers of the ubiquitous spectrum of human experience. We are thrilled by the discovery that each of us is, indeed at once the creator, director, actor and audience, every moment and all the time, of the worlds (of waking as of dream) reeling past in bewildering variety. With this Self-discovery, all the various traits of the Sushupti Principal described in the Upanishadic

womb, the source and the sink of everything - - fall neatly into meaningful place.

The mantra thus crystallises the unique, and rigorously logical foundation of Advaita, the unitary philosophy of Vendanta.

The next mantra extends and elaborates this insight.



## SEVENTH MANTRA

नान्तः प्रज्ञं न बहिष्प्रज्ञं नोभयतः प्रज्ञं न  
 प्रज्ञानघनं न प्रज्ञं नाप्रज्ञम् ।  
 अदृष्टव्यवहार्यमग्राह्यमलक्षणम्  
 अचिन्त्यमव्य पदेश्यमेकात्मप्रत्यसारं  
 प्रपञ्चोशमं शांतं शिवमद्वैतं चतुर्थं  
 मन्यन्ते स आत्मा स विज्ञेयः ॥७॥

nāntaḥ prajñam na bahiṣprajñam  
 nobhayataḥ prajñam na  
 prajñānaghaṇam na prajñam  
 naprajñam; adrastavyavhārya-  
 magrāhyamalaksanam  
 acintyamavyapadeśyamekātmā-  
 pratyasāram prapañcośamam  
 sāntam śivamadvaitam  
 caturtha mangyanate sa ātmā sa  
 vijñeyah.

## Seventh Mantra

- II    Knower not of inner world<sup>1</sup>,  
       Not of outer world<sup>2</sup>;  
       Not of in-between the two<sup>3</sup>;  
       Not consciousness congealed<sup>4</sup>;  
       Not the sentient<sup>5</sup>, nor the in sentient<sup>6</sup>,  
       Unseeable<sup>7</sup>, unrelatable<sup>8</sup>, ungraspable<sup>9</sup>,  
       Quality-free<sup>10</sup>, unconceivable<sup>11</sup>, unvoiceable<sup>12</sup>,  
       Intuited as the Atman by the Atman alone<sup>13</sup>;  
       Phenomenon-free<sup>14</sup>, serene<sup>15</sup>;  
       Of the nature of bliss<sup>16</sup>,  
       Of one-ness<sup>17</sup>;  
       Deemed the Fourth<sup>18</sup>;  
       - - THAT, the Atman - -  
       THAT is to be realised

inner world - - Taijasa, the dream state.

outer world - - Vaishwanara, the waking state,

in-between the two - - This points to the transitional (twilight) experiences between states and to experiences like day-dreams and dreams within dreams.

consciousness congealed - - Praagya, referred to in Mantra V.

3. Not the sentient, nor the insentient - - Not the perceiver of the phenomenal (subject-object) world, nor the perceptible, in waking, dream and any other possible state.
12. Unseeable .... unvoiceable - - These indicate the total absence of any relationship between *prajñam* (subject) and *aprajñam* (object).

13. Intuited as the Atman by the Atman alone - - The Atman, impossible of being proved objectively, is evidenced by the intuitive, undeniable experience of "I am" of all beings.
14. Phenomenon - free - - Independent of manifestation as the phenomenal world, and therefore immutable.
15. serene - - Ever free from inner disturbance, never ruffled.
16. Of the nature of bliss - - Bliss through integration of everything into ITSELF.
17. Of oneness - - Secondless unity beyond division, difference, distinction and alienation.
18. Deemed the Fourth - - Said to be the 'Fourth' quarter of the totality of experience of animate existence - - the other three being waking, dream and dreamless sleep.

The previous mantra explained Reality as the substratum of the three states of experience. This was achieved by describing it in positive terms. This Mantra points out that Reality is independent of every state of experience, waking, dream or sleep, or of any other state imaginable. While denying the possibility of describing Reality, it asserts, too, the positive nature of Reality.

This Mantra clears up a possible misunderstanding that Reality deemed the "Fourth (*pāda*)", is a distinctive state of experience on a level with the states of waking, dream and sleep. Reality, though considered the "Fourth (*pāda*)"- - synonymously termed Tureeya, as it is here sought to be explained - - is not to be equated in any manner whatsoever with the two perceptive, conscious states of waking and dream, or with deep sleep (Sushupti), the inferred state of experience, wherein waking actuality and dream fantasy are kennelled to quiescence, if not to non-existence.



Reality, having no concrete properties, to identify It by, is beyond mind - consciousness and therefore beyond cerebration and verbal expression as an objective entity. The mantra drives home this fact by denying illustratively both positive and negative aspects by which an object can be identified - - e.g., not the sentient etc., phenomena-free etc. Ever the subject (the Atman) can be and is identified, the mantra explains, only by ITSELF as intuitive experience of ITSELF.

Tureeya is the unceasing SELF-awareness, co-existing unremittingly with every state of experience. The abstract of abstracts, IT is the one and only intuitive experience ("I exist") ticking away unfailingly, independent of mind-consciousness, (of time and space of waking and dream, and of) their absence in Sushupti. It is this never-broken, indivisible, intuitive SELF-experience without which nothing exists. None, animate or otherwise, it should be noted, can ever feel or state "I don't exist." For, obviously one can never deny one's own existence. The experience of "I" is shown here to be both distinct from and concurrent with and surviving and surpassing the three states of experience - - waking, dream and dreamless sleep.

The Upanishad directs our attention to the above vital aspect and uniqueness of Tureeya and exhorts us to "realise" IT.

Here, "realise" is indeed a puerile and inadequate expression for the enormous burden of significance it has to convey. Total and uninterrupted *conscious* awareness of the deathless, undimming, infinite, quality-free Atman with unwavering conviction and identity is Vedantic "Realisation." It is SELF-understanding and SELF-awareness (as distinct from the mind-consciousness of the flitting ego) so deep as to be axiomatic. As sage Ramana indicates, "Realisation" is the deep conviction, that the SELF is not the very limited individual but the limit-

free Atman, as firm and instinctive as the belief that one is a human being and not a quadruped. "Realisation" would imply total assimilation of the unitary (advaitic) concept and disassociation from the limited eg. Staying effortlessly anchored in Atman-awareness through stress and storm and flights of ever-flowing conscious experience is "Realisation" - - very much like the unobtrusive, subdued, sweet, sustaining stream of the *tanpura* notes, witnessing the infinite variations of the melody cavorting before it, without itself being affected by the ever-changing, ephemeral melody. But unlike the limited analogy, SELF-awareness is not sensed apart from perceptible experience of the objective world. In different words, while intuitive SELF-awareness is the birthmark (*swabhāva*) of creatures all, **conscious** experience of the individual SELF is the mark of only the "Realised one." Such a being is said to be in the state of Tureeya. That is the consummation of human existence.

## **EIGHTH MANTRA**

सोऽ यमात्माध्यक्षरमोङ्कारोऽ धिमात्रं  
पादा मात्रा, मात्राश्च पादा अकार  
उकारो मकार इति ॥८॥

so'yamātmādhyaṣramo-  
nkarō'dhimātram pādā mātṛā  
matṛāśca pādā akār ukāro  
makār iti.

## Eighth Mantra

VIII     That this Atman the same<sup>1</sup>  
             When lettered<sup>2</sup>,  
             is the sonant Aum<sup>3</sup>:  
             When syllabled,  
             The quarters<sup>4</sup> are syllables<sup>5</sup>,  
             The syllables are quarters  
             As sounds, *a*<sup>6</sup>, *u*<sup>7</sup>, *m*<sup>8</sup>.

1. This Atman the same - - The primordial ubiquitous, timeless, infinite, identified earlier through dissection of the distinctive categories of human experience.
2. lettered - - Spelled out in the terms of the Sanskrit alphabet.
3. the sonant Aum - - A chant, intoned as **Om**.
4. The quarters - - Planes of experience clearly demarcated earlier as *jāgarita* (waking), *taijasa* (dream) and *sushupti* (dreamless slumber).
5. the syllables - - The letters *a*, *u*, *m*, each of which makes an articulate self-contained, complete, syllable component, *mātrā*, of the sonant Aum.
6. *a* - - अ vowel sound of 'a' as in alert.
7. *u* - - उ Vowel sound of 'U' as in Usurp.
8. *m* - - म A consonant in the Sanskrit alphabet, corresponding to 'm' in mum.

The Upanishad started out in the first mantra with the assertion that the sonant Aum symbolizes completely, nay, is, Brahman, the Reality. It processed to portray the characteris-

tics of the three states of experience, waking, dream and sleep and of the Reality underlying the states so far as it can be comprehended by the mind.

All the explanation so far has been from the stand point of the Atman, giving prominence to that which is indicated by the sonant Aum. Now the sonant is sought to be identified with its audible components, A, U, m. The Upanishad now indicates a method to be adopted for the realisation of the Atman. Thus, the mantra picks up the thread from the enunciation of the Atman (Reality) in the first mantra.

The sonorous chant, Aum, a combination of two vowels and a consonant, picked out of the Sanskrit alphabet, crystallizes symbolically the Atman, previously identified as the stainless subject, "I," the pure SELF-awareness - - the Vedantic concept of the Unitary Principle (advaitic unity) behind the seeming, changing variety of the flowing universe.

The question arises, that, while previously the Atman has been stated to comprise four quarters (*pāda*), Aum has only three syllables (*mātra*). This question is answered in the subsequent mantra. Suffice it here to point out that the fourth *pāda* of the Atman, as explained previously, is not indeed a distinct *pāda*, unlike the three known states of experience.

The believing Hindu is inclined to attribute to the sonant a mystical, occult, extra-sensory potency. Any sonorous incantation, chanted long enough by a credulous mind, it is known, can induce a self-hypnotic somnolence or euphoria - - even a trance. Any substance -- or lack of it - - in such a belief, however, does not shake the sound logical conclusion of monism derived in Maandookya. It is therefore likely to prove more fruitful if Aum is taken to be a symbolic euphonious

condensation for a meaningful chant of the philosophy of Vedanta and omnific vision crystallised in it.



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**NINTH MANTRA**



जागरितस्थानो वैश्वानरो ऽ कारः  
 प्रथमा मात्राप्तेरादित्त्वाद्वाऽऽप्नोति ह वै  
 सर्वान् कामानादिश्च भवति य एवं वेद ॥९॥

*jāgaritasthāmo vaiśvānaro'*  
*kārah prathamā mātṛāpterā-*  
*dittvādvā 'pnōti ha vai*  
*sarvān kāmānādiśca*  
*bhavati ya evam veda.*

## Ninth Mantra

IX      The waking state, Vaishwanara,  
           Is utterance 'A' अ prime syllable<sup>1</sup>,  
           For pervasiveness<sup>2</sup>  
           And for primogeniture<sup>3</sup>.  
           Whoso knows it as such,  
           Verily overcomes desires all  
           And becomes the First.

1. utterance 'A' अ prime syllable - - 'A' अ is the prime syllable of sonant Aum and the prime letter of almost all alphabets.
2. For pervasiveness - - Because 'A' अ leavens all articulate sounds.
3. for primogeniture - - Because of being the first (in alphabet, in sonant Aum and of the three states of experience).
4. the First - - The foremost, the supreme.

In the last mantra, the Upanishad has pointed out the congruence between Aum and Reality, the Atman. Now it explains in detail the similarities between the two with the aim of directing the mind to the Reality at every thought, symbol and chant of the sonant, Aum, and to its potency to pull the mind and tether it to the Atman.

Placement of 'A' अ, the first letter in the Sanskrit alphabet, as the first syllable in Aum, to represent the waking state, deemed to be the first in the sequence of the three distinctive types of experience, may not seem to be logically valid inasmuch as the unbroken cycle of experiential states, giving prime rank to any one of them would seem to be arbitrary. For the dream state, no less than wake-like during

the dream, can lay equal claim to the first place. (In fact, the Upanishad itself has earlier claimed to Taijasa, a 'superior' importance with tenable justification, compared to others). More valid - - and of value in the philosophic discussion - - is the resemblance in the significance between 'A' अ and Vaishwanara. Language cannot be complete without the vowel or letter 'A' अ which therefore can be considered to be *prathamā*, the first. In various states of experience, Vaishwanara can be assigned the first rank, as only during waking we generally undertake to analyse the three states of experience and arrive at the underlying Reality.

Another common feature between 'A' अ and Vaishwanara is their ubiquity. As there cannot be any utterance in the absence of the vowel 'A' अ there cannot be any cosmos in the absence of Vaishwanara. We generally think of dream, sleep and other worlds only in the waking state.

The mantra portrays the state of the seeker who recognises the similarity between 'A' अ of Aum and Vaishwanara. Commentators in general confine themselves to the literal meaning of the words and state that such a seeker attains *प्राप्नोति* (*āpnōti*) the fulfillment of all desires and becomes the foremost *आदि* (*ādī*) among men. They argue that the prizes offered are intended to encourage the seeker in his pursuit. But in the Upanishad which is devoted to freeing the aspirant from mundane desires, the interpretation seems to be rather incongruous. No doubt for the seeker who has succeeded in identifying 'A' अ of Aum with Vaishwanara, both of them with the Self, naturally the desires of Vaishwanara of all, become his own and their satisfaction become his own fulfillment. Or in a different plane, beyond the Light radiating from the unbroken awareness of Satchidananda Brahman, there can hardly be any desire left in the realised sadhak, who has achieved the sum of all desires. For the aim of every human

effort is unbroken happiness which invariably proves ephemeral. He, when therefore through Aum (or otherwise) understands that the worlds of waking and dream are nothing but creatures of his mind, unending felicity is achieved and desire ceases without a trace. For the worlds are conterminous with the mind and therefore for each mind the world is not only primordial but also ends with it. (Lest the sadhak who has intellectually comprehended the identity of Vaishwanara with 'A' अ of Aum come to believe that he is greater than his creation, that is, the worlds, the next mantra disabuses him of any such notional separation between the mind and its creature, the phenomenal world).

The world 'first' आदि *ādi* in the mantra has been commonly interpreted as the 'first of the great' or 'the first among seekers' or 'the foremost among men'. But taking the semantic, philosophical connotation of आदि *ādi* - - the prime, pristine, primordial - - the mantra assures, 'whose knows as such' attains the very ultimate of his spiritual aspiration - - that is to become ( *bhavati*), *ādi* , the primordial ITSELF. And this would be quite in keeping with the *raison d'être* of the Upanishad - - to expound the fundamental Reality and to guide and direct the seeker to 'the Light' - - rather than to promise the sadhaka mundane, ephemeral eminence. - - through the enhanced understanding of synonymity between 'A' अ of Aum and Vaishwanara.

It is perhaps significant that Gaudapada- - Kaarika hardly touches on the incentives apparently offered in this mantra and the two subsequent ones, which do not add in any way to the thesis, logic or argument enshrined in the Upanishad.

The mantra puts वैश्वानर *vaiśvānara* (Vaishwanara), जामरिस्थान *jagaritasthāna* (waking state), अकार *akāra* (Utterance 'A'), all the three in the nominative case, suggesting

the equality of the three. The commentaries, it is rather curious, choose to interpret जागरितस्थान *jāgaritasthāna*, as if it were, in the locative case. Their interpretation runs on the lines : "Vaishwanara, whose sphere of activity is the waking state is 'A' अ .....". On the other hand, faithfulness to the original nominative case of all the three factors, (*jāgaritasthāna*, *vaisvanara*, *akāra*), asserts unequivocally that *jāgaritasthān*, the seeming object, *vaisvānara*, the seeming subject; *akāra*, the seeming act of experience; to be identical. In other words, the perceived, the perceiver and the act of perception, the three factors, are but one and same intrinsically, states the mantra.

The design of Maandookya is perhaps more faithfully served by faithfulness to the mother - - mantra.

ॐ

## **TENTH MANTRA**

स्वप्नस्थानस्तैजस उकारो, द्वितीया  
 मात्रा उत्कर्षादुभयत्वाद्, उत्कर्षति ह  
 वै ज्ञानसन्तति समानश्च भवति,  
 नास्याब्रह्मवित् कुले य एवं वेद ॥१०॥

*svapnasthānastaiyasa ukāro  
 dvitīya mātṛā utkarsādubhaya-  
 tvad, utkarsati ha vai jñāna-  
 santatim samānsca thavati,  
 nāsyābrahmavit kule ya evam veda.*

## Tenth Mantra

X      The dream state, Taijasa,  
         Is utterance 'U' उ second syllable,  
         For superiority <sup>1</sup>,  
         And for place amidships<sup>2</sup>.  
         Whoso knows as such,  
         Surely swells comprehension<sup>3</sup>,  
         Same with all<sup>4</sup>;  
         No one in his line,  
         Will unknowing be of Brahman.

1. Superiority - - 'U' उ in Aum (pronounced as in full) standing for Taijasa, dream experience, is deemed superior to 'A' अ the waking experience, in the order of placement in the alphabet and in the order of origin of its utterance in the vocal apparatus.
2. amidships - - Dream state sandwiched between the states of waking and deep sleep.
3. swells comprehension - - Inquiry into the role and significance of Taijasa, dream experience, expands the comprehension and discernment of Vedantic Reality.
4. Same with all - - Looks equally an all as Atman the same.

The upanishadic seer who earlier expounded the logical equation between the waking state and the dream state, now reveals that dream experience is in fact superior to waking experience. On first hearing, this may sound whimsical. For 'A' अ in Aum is the First letter of the alphabet. 'A' अ is the pervasive syllable of utterance. Standing as it does for Vaishwanara, it is the state in which the experiences of all the states are cognised, threshed, vinnowed and sieved for Atman-



grain. With all this in its favour, it would naturally be hard to accept 'A' अ the waking state, as inferior in any respect or degree to 'U' उ the dream state.

Digging deeper, however, we discern the crucial importance of dream-experience in the hunt for Truth. In the appraisal and analysis of this distinctive segment in the gamut of experience common to all human beings, we cannot but be struck by the fact that if it were not for Taijasa, we could never, repeal never, make the vital discovery : Mind - - and mind alone - - is the progenitor of the beguilingly actual dream - world. And without command of this knowledge, we could never come to realize the incredible fact that the waking universe is a caricature no less of the mind. Lack of this fundamental discovery would deny us the evidence, argument and logic that can lead to the unitary concept of Vedanta. Now in seeing Taijasa as the indispensable link in the chain of unitary philosophy, we have to grant the superiority assigned to dream-experience by Maandookya over the other components of life-experience. To reiterate : without the aid of Taijasa, experience of the other states by themselves cannot ferry us across to the haven of Truth.

As in the previous mantra, the Upanishad declares that the three factors - - the subject, the object and the predicate - - though seemingly separate, are fundamentally identical. This is achieved by putting all the three - -  
*svapanasthāna* (dream state), तैजस *taijasa* (Taijasa) and उकार *ukāra* (utterance 'U') - - in the nominative case. Treating *svapanasthāna*, the seeming object, as it were in the locative case, in their translation, as commentators do, would introduce duality against the avowed thesis of the Upanishad - - indivisible unity of all the factors.

Advaita is again asserted in the second part of the

mantra. Critics, sticking to the literal meaning of the words, treat this part as offering prizes to the aspirant who comes to equate Tajjasa with 'U' ॐ of Aum. For example, the prize, "No one among the descendants of the enlightened seeker will be unknowing of Brahman" would be rather unrealistic. For the progeny of souls even perfectly realised like Vyasa and Lord Krishna failed to rise to the level of gyanis.

With the insight into the mechanism of the dream state - that it is but the projection of the mind - - the seeker who equates 'U' ॐ of Aum, comes to realize that the subject (the singular ego) explodes in the dream into a whole new objective world of infinite variety of perfect verisimilitude with the waking world. He who comes to realise thus, truly enlarges the sphere and modes of comprehension of the Atman or Reality. That is, he spreads the torch for and wide. A characteristic of such a realised seeker is his felt sense of identity with all existence.

Further in his circle (not necessarily limited to has family or descendants), no one is unknowing of Brahman or the Reality. Perhaps the significance of this statement is better appreciated when the experience is recalled of some of the sadhakas who come under the wings of gyanis like Ramana and Ramakrishna. It is said that seekers who approached Ramana, bristling with questions spiritual, quickly found themselves tongue-ties, with the questions, unasked, melting away, and doubts resolved.

## **ELEVENTH MANTRA**

सुषुप्तस्थानः प्राज्ञो मकारस्तृतीया  
 मात्रा, मितेरपीतेर्वा । मिनोति ह वा  
 इदं सर्वमपीतश्च भवति य एवं वेद ॥११॥

*susuptasthānah prajño*

*makārastratīyā mātṛā*

*miterpitervā; minoti ha vā*

*idam sarvamapītsca bhavati*

*ya evam veda.*

## Eleventh Mantra

XI      The state of dreamless sleep, Praagya,  
           Is utterance 'M' म् the third syllable<sup>1</sup>,  
           For measure<sup>2</sup>,  
           for mergence<sup>3</sup>, to.  
           Whoso knows as such,  
           Verily measures,  
           And becomes merger of this all.

1. third syllable - - 'M' म् ranking third in Aum, corresponds to Sushupti (deep sleep), in the sequence of the three states of experience.
2. For measure - - Because Sushupti (deep sleep), witness as it does, the emergence and mergence of both Vaishwanara and Taijasa, is able to appraise their nature, and reveals their dependence on Sushupti. Similarly 'M' म् in the repetitive chant of Aum, witnessing the entry into and exit from Aum, of the two syllables 'A' अ and 'U' उ defines their dependent nature in the sonant Aum.
3. For mergence - - Because Sushupti absorbs Vaishwanara and Taijasa into itself and makes them ONE with itself. Similarly 'M' म् absorbing 'a' अ and 'U' उ integrates them into the undivided whole, sonant Aum.

It is note worthy that in this mantra, as in earlier ones the words *prājña* and *susuptasthāna* are both placed in nominative case. By the use of the nominative in all the three mantras 9-11 for describing the correspondence of 'A' अ 'U' उ 'M' म् with Vaishwanara, Taijasa and Praagya respectively, the Upanishad asserts the indivisibility of the substratum underling the states. 'A' अ 'U' उ 'M' म् and their ranking as first, second, and third, are only a division

and classification of convenience for arriving at the fundamental Principle.

The sadhak who has realized the equality of 'M' म् with Praagya of Sushupti evaluates and "measures" out portions of the waking and dream states out of the totality of experience. In other words he recognises that the waking and dream worlds are no more than a modicum of the infinite potential of Reality.

As in the repetitive chant of Aum, 'A' अ and 'U' उ the syllable preceding 'M' म् sink into it, the waking and dream worlds get absorbed in Sushupti, to become one with it, Praagya of Sushupti is the absorbent अपीते *apīte*) of all that exists. Similarly the sadhak who has identified 'M' म् of Aum with Sushupti, comprehends everything within himself. He knows the extreme limitation of the ego, in contrast to the limitless of the Atman with which he comes to identify himself. He is convinced that the world is nothing but the projection of his ego-mind.

Mantras 9-11 declare the identity of each of the *mātrās* of Aum with the ultimate Reality or the Atman, and indicate incentives as it were for the sadhak who succeeds in identifying himself, through the identification of each of the *mātrās*, with one of the three states of experience. Commentators are given to sorting out, grading and separating the fruits according to the seeker by his successive identification with the *mātrās* successively<sup>1</sup>. Indeed for the seeker who has come to so identify himself with the Ultimate, there can be no gradation or differentiation at all between things or qualities or phenomena. If the sadhak has comprehended and assimilated the significance of ubiquity and equality of all symbolised by

one *mātrā*, he has realised them in all *mātrās* of Aum. It is like a connoisseur gourmet aware of the essential sweetness of the several desserts placed before him in different forms and flavours. Every state and every *mātrā* (syllable) holds out for him the same total comprehension.



1. Seeming incentives can be considered as conforming to the convention of "eulogy of the subject matter" in such works as described in "Vendantasara of Sadananda," Chap V statements 183, 184 and 189.

## **TWELFTH MANTRA**



अमात्रश्चतुर्थो ऽव्यवहार्यः प्रपञ्चोपशमः  
 शिवोऽद्वैत एवमोङ्कार आत्मैव  
 संविशत्यात्मनात्मानं य एवं वेद ॥१२॥

*amātraścaturtho 'vyaharyah*  
*prapañcośamah śivi'dvaita*  
*evamonikāra ātmaiva*  
*samviśatyātmanātmanam*  
*ya evam veda.*

## Twelfth Mantra

XII      Syllable-less<sup>1</sup>, the fourth<sup>2</sup>, the noumenal<sup>3</sup>,  
             The worlds ceased<sup>4</sup>,  
             Bliss, secondless,  
             Thus Aum is Atman itself<sup>5</sup>.  
             Whoso knows as such  
             Merges himself with the Atman<sup>6</sup>.

1. Syllable-less - - The unpronounced, soundless wake of Aum that succeeds and survives the audible utterances 'A' अ "U" उ 'M' म preceding it.
2. the fourth - - Tureeya. As explained at length earlier in the seventh mantra, this is not the ranking of states of experience in sequence, but a pointer to the unbroken, intuitive awareness of the SELF that sustains and outlasts conscious (waking), subconscious (dreaming) and pure SELF-awareness (deep sleep) experiences.
3. the noumenal - - Beyond the purview (reach) of the activities of the body-mind complex, that is, beyond physical and mental grasp, but ceaselessly intuited.
4. The worlds ceased - - For the one in Tureeya, the worlds of waking and dream cease to exist, inasmuch as he is but a witness of the two. In Sushupti, on the other hand, both the worlds disappear for the sleeper.
5. Aum is Atman itself - - Comprising as it does the articulate and the audible as well as the inarticulate and the inaudible, Aum stands, like the Atman, for the total sum of all existence, the perceivable and the imperceivable, too.
6. Merges himself with the Atman - - His individual self

realises that he is, in truth, the immanent, ubiquitous, immortal, infinite self alone.

The crowning verse is an analogy, an analysis, a logical argument which portrays Aum as a symbol and pointer to the advaitic Atman through the dissection of the gamut of biological experience common to all life.

This verse crystallises as it were the avowed object of the Upanishad, namely to expose the mistaken identity of the ephemeral ego with the inherent immortal Atman - Reality - and thus enlightens the seeker with the supreme truth of the underlying intuitive self-awareness.

A close analogy between the immortal, ubiquitous Atman and the three states of human experience would be : The same substratum  $H_2O$ , when liquid, is titled as water, when gas as vapour, when solid as ice. The *prajñānaghana* (ice) of Sushupti melts into Vaishwanara, or evaporates into Taijasa. Only the name-and form of the self-same *sat* keep changing. That the vapour is different from the liquid and the liquid from the solid of the same substance is an illusion (*māyā*). Understanding of this essential Truth underlying (running through) the seeming variables is gyana, enlightenment.

Another helpful image of the phenomenon of the ONE appearing as many, would be that of a blank screen, and the images appearing and disappearing on it. The audible components of Aum appear and disappear, we observe, on the snow - white screen of blank silence. As no image can exist without the canvas behind it, no sound can be perceived in the absence of its parent, silence. In contrast, silence (the Atman) can, like the blank screen, exist and does prevail by itself, for itself, without its perceivable offshoots. Thus silence, like the Atman - - why as the Atman itself - - is the all-pervasive,

immortal, infinite Reality, which is both the fertile soil and the terminal grave for the mortal acoustics. Substitute now "ego" for the audible Aum and the Atman for silence, and you have the true relationship between the ever - changing phenomenal world and the never-changing Atman-Reality.

It is necessary to point out here, even at the risk of repetition, that the Aum sonant (Aumkaara) does not merely symbolize the three states of experience, but extends beyond them too. Tureeya of Aumkaara, its mother-silence, stretches from before the audible utterance, during, and after the chant of the sonant ceases, too. And this silence is in perfect correspondence with the Atman-SELF which threads the three states of experience in precisely the same manner as silence does Aumkaara.

Aum, we observe, is identical, point to point, with the three states of experience (waking, dream and sleep) and the Reality. Tureeya, underlying them. The states emerge out of Tureeya, the unremitting intuitive experience of the SELF, and merge back again into Tureeya in endless cycles.

As the waking world is a projection of the conscious mind, the dream world is a projection of the subconscious (realised only after waking). In Sushupti the causative mind-consciousness and the ego are absent (aśleep). The seed of Vaishwanara and of Taijasa can be deemed to be dormant in Sushupti, sprouting again in the waking and dream states. Sushupti, associated with the absence of mind-consciousness, is distinguished by experience of secondless Self-awareness. Tureeya, on the other hand, experienced uniquely by the gyani, the enlightened one, is the state of ceaseless Self-awareness in all the three states. Tureeya is endowed with another vital distinction too. While Sushupti of the agyani, the

unenlightened one, is fertile ground for the birth-and-death cycle of wake and dream, for the gyani who has attained permanently the state of Tureeya, the seed of the cycle is burnt out for good.

The silence that follows and precedes the incantation of Aum is shown to be the "Open Sesame" of the unsuspected, priceless treasure of Ali Baba's secret cave. Pondering over Tureeya, the unuttered foundation of Aum, we discover that silence is the coveted ocean of blessed serenity of limitless immensity. In the unfathomless intensity of blissful silence, all and every sound is but a momentary bubble, collapses and loses itself in the mother-main, silence, whence it had stridently erupted.

Silence, the ground immortal of the audible Aum, is time-free, all-pervasive; sound, its offspring (like the ego), is pitifully limited and ephemeral, and regresses helplessly back to the womb of silence (as the ego does to the boundless Atman in Sushupti).

The opening statement of Maandookya in mantra 2, that the Atman is of four quarters, we can now see, is a division of convenience, hypothesized by the seer for the benefit of the seeker. The declaration of successive identity of each of the *mātrās* of Aum with the Atman establishes the indivisibility of the Atman with all that exists in each and every state of experience. The total perspective portrayed by Maandookya leads to the convincing revelation of advaitic Reality.

Viewing objectively, Aum is clearly the invention of the keen searching spirit of man, sculpted with purpose and determination of a defined end. That end is to raise the mind to *conscious* SELF-awareness (that is, in spite of, or concurrently with, the presence of the ego-mind), and to cultivate such SELF-awareness to prevail without break through the

ites of ever-changing experience.

The precious thought, analysis and profound conclusion Maandookya have been capsuled into Aum- - an ever-  
 ining crystal with the lattice of the three states of vibrating  
 perience embedded in the infinite, all-embracing, transpar  
 t space around - - (the Tureeya) - - in an unforgettable,  
 ditary architectural pattern.

A device as concise and elegant as it is convenient, Aum  
 n prove to the sadhak a solicitously reminding guru ever at  
 s elbow- - bodiless, yet none more real- - verily the manifest  
 essence beside him of the blissful Atman Itself.

Put in different words, Aum, the symbolic sonant of  
 danta, emerges as the most ingenious invention of human  
 ought, crystallising as it does the entirely logical basis of  
 lvaitha, or monism, and provides the seeker with a felicitous  
 inter to and reminder of the ultimate Reality. Aum is  
 ually remarkable for comprehending the entire range of  
 uman experience as well as the meaningful ocean of sustain-  
 g mother-silence. The Aum sonant thus continually reminds  
 e sadhak of both the beads of experience and the stringing  
 lden thread of Reality, thereby constantly pulling him back  
 om the shining, distracting beads to silent, but immortal,  
 immanent Atman. The final aim and achievement would be  
 e disappearance of the ego and its mergence with the  
 ality.

The realisation of unity with the Universal, won through  
 mprehension, practice and assimilation of the total signifi-  
 nce of the Aum sonant has a unique fruit awaiting the  
 spirant. While only Sushupti, deep sleep, confers on one and  
 l blissful serenity, the Tureeya to the enlightened one offers  
 ubroken anchorage, consciously, in unified Atman even in

the states of apparent multiplicity and diversity. Clearly, it is this observation that prompted Lord Krishna to explain to his disciple Partha, in the Bhagavad Geetaa :

"What is night for creatures all,  
Bright day it is for the yogi self-reined;  
Wherein creatures are all wide awake,  
That indeed is night-like  
For the yogi enlightened" (II, 69)

Maandookya helps us trace the foundation of the multistoried edifice of waking, dream and sleep, to the mistaken identity of the extremely limited, individualised mortal ego-mould with the enormous, unmeasurable, immortal Atman-mountain. To illustrate by another example: The ego-shadow is ever attempting to eclipse the undying Atman-sun.

Fear, hate, love and all emotions are creations of our own ego-mind complex. This fact comes home the moment we pause and reflect on the happenings in the dream from which we have just woken up. Maandookya points out that we have no logical justification to presume that, in spite of appearances, the emotions and creatures and experiences in the so-called waking state are no less dreamy creations of the ego-mind complex.

The realisation and rooted conviction in regard to the above Truth at once drops the curtain of the mistaken multiplicity from the ONE and ONLY ONE that is appearing as many.

When the Light of this Truth grows intense, full, continuous, what else can the enlightened become but a still, silent Ramana ? He becomes inevitably an automaton, ever a mere witness of the parade streaming around him, including himself, now but a body, an object, apart from the indivisible

ubiquitous, immortal SELF. Such a gyani, whom can he love, whom can he hate ? For, if he does he is but hating and loving the image of himself in the *māyā* mirror.

May Aum, the pregnant *pranava*,  
 Grow into a magnificent obsession  
 Till the seeking spirit-individual  
 Blossoms into the ONE, Atman,  
 Undifferentiate, immortal Spirit-universal.

*Sānti ॐ Sānti*



## APPENDIX I

### Awareness and Consciousness

Awareness is the intuition of existence (being) experienced by all beings in the states of waking and dream. As such it is identified in and as, the state of dreamless sleep, after waking by inference.

Consciousness is the sense of existence which the individual cognises by the mind in the waking and dream states. The distinction and marked difference between *awareness* and *consciousness*, as used in this work need to be emphasized. *Awareness* of intuitive existence which needs no proof, prevails in all the three states of experience, while consciousness can exist only when the mind exists - that is, only during waking and dream. Unlike awareness, consciousness can exist only in association with an object concrete or abstract.

## **APPENDIX II**

### **An Insight into Maandookya for the Sadhak**

**K. S. Rangappa**

An elaboration of an insight into Maandookya, albeit unorthodox, is perhaps wanted here. A deeper and wider comprehension of the Upanishad may aid the seeker more in his sadhana.

The Upanishad has established that the mistaken importance and seriousness attached to the pitifully limited, ephemeral personality of oneself—the ego—is the sole cause of unwanted experiences suffered by the individual during his life-span.

Two main questions normally assail the seeker of the Truth. The first is : Why the ego ? The second is " How the ego ?

Maandookya has shown up logically the fallacy of the first doubt. It proves that the mortal, changing phenomenal world being but a projection of the mind, itself a victim of the same infirmities, the ego, a twin inalienably entwined with the mind, is no less unreal - - a gossamer ghost, identical with, and therefore as unworthy of being taken seriously as the last night's dream events - - in so far as the emotional responses of the ego to its environment is concerned. One, wisely convinced of this has clearly a fair chance of remaining unruffled in the ups and downs of work-a-day life.

An understanding now of "How the ego?" - - its birth, growth and demise, its inconstancy, its cyclic diurnal behaviour - - could, with the insight gained, help the seeker attack the

incorrigible mischief-monger, and chisel it down to the barest bone. The reciprocal sequel would be the steady release of the sadhak from the strangle-hold of his ego to rise towards the peak of permanent self-awareness.

To know the enemy is to win half the battle.

In order to comprehend the "How the ego?", we do well to begin from the beginning.

What is 'ego'? Ego is here conceived and defined as the individual mind-consciousness (when senses are awake and alert) which makes every organism unquestioningly feel and believe that it has a distinctive and separate existence of its own. "Ego" is the sense that drives the organism to fight not only for its survival, but to retain its separate identity from other egos.

Maandookya has established, as we have seen before, that the ego is an illusory projection of the waking and dream minds, and that it is but a seeming spark of the timeless, infinite and ubiquitous Atman. The process of tearing down the delusion is *sādhana* and achievement is *gyana*, enlightenment. The *gyani*, freed from the ego is ever anchored in the Light of conscious identity with Universal Existence - - *sthitaprajñā*<sup>1</sup> of the Bhagavadgeetaa.

Conviction born out of an understanding of the birth and shaping of the ego may help - - to give a fresh analogy - - in working out a cure for the illusion, as a study of the etiology of a disease can often help shape a treatment for the syndrome.

Specific observation reveals that the new born human babe, like other creature, is but a bundle of instincts - - and no more - - characteristic of the specie. The babe is not

conscious (self-conscious) of its body at birth, nor of other bodies or things around it. That is, the ego in the new born has not made its appearance yet. Its functions are ruled entirely by its inherited instincts (*vāsanās* or *prārabdha*), beyond the purview and need of mind-consciousness.

Mind, for our purposes, can be defined as consciousness, an end-product forged by inherited intelligence (specific to each specie and characteristic of it) working upon the ceaseless stream of sensual responses to stimuli buffeting the senses. Physical experience steadily piling up in the creature is ever in ferment, catalysed by intelligence. The complex inner interaction between the experiences of the different senses in unpredictable permutations and combinations is continually etched in the recording part of the brain. This storehouse is the *memory*.

This gamut of abstract activities and their products make up the abstraction we grossly call the *Mind*. And necessarily the content of every mind has to be, and is, peculiarly its own, and unique - - although its tools, the senses, the sense organs, intelligence and intellect, and its method of working are similar and limitations and potentials of the mind vary from the microbe to man. At the bottom of the evolutionary ladder if it is all, and only, instinct, at the very top it is an unmeasurable mix of beast and brain.

The crucial key to the disparities between the minds of different species seems to lie in the nature and degree of Intelligence each has inherited. Intelligence can be deemed to be the repository, among others, of *potentials* of faculties. Determined by genetic inheritance, the variety, order and sharpness of faculties are not only specific to specie, but are chiselled finely different even from individual to individual within the specie, too.

To illustrate. A cat, born and bred in Mysore or Delhi or London can only mew. At best the meows of the cats may differ in tone and pitch. On the other hand, the human offspring of Mysore develops articulate speech in Kannada, the child of Delhi in Hindi, and the one in London in English.

Here two faculties come into play - - capacity for speech and the capacity to learn languages. While the homo is endowed with both, the canine is denied both. (That the faculties of speech and language-learning are separate and distinct is proved by the fact that, while the faculty of speech lasts all through life, the ability to learn new languages, so fecund in childhood, largely dries up with age.)

To glance the distinguishing major faculties of the human kind. Human intelligence commands insatiable curiosity, capacities for observation, mental record, recall, comparison, deduction, generalisation, reasoning, deduction, generalisation, reasoning, conscious decision-making, and the will to plan and execute the decision. It may be necessary to repeat that the above inventory, unique to homo sapiens is but the *potential*, rarely, if ever, realised to the full in any individual. It also demonstrates the unbridgeable distinction between man and beast, and gives a glimpse of the amazing Ali Baba's cave that the human brain is. Its superiority by far to that of the nearest animals in the evolutionary ladder like the baboon, the chimpanzee, the porpoise and the talking cockatoo.

After this apparent digression, to steer back to the evolution of mind in human kind.

The self-exclusive sense of individuality, arising concomitantly with the mind, constitutes the ego. Mind and ego are so inextricably entwined in their formation - - their appearance, activity and behaviour in waking and dream, and their simultaneous disappearance in deep sleep, that it would be

more precise to conceive them as the *mind-ego complex*. For mind and ego rise and set together like the sun and its light.

In the newborn human babe, a creature yet of pure instincts and reflexes, the mind-ego complex, as noted earlier, has not shaped yet. This is proved by the experience, without exception, of every normal human being.

No man, for instance, is able to recall the happenings to himself in the first few months after birth, even as he cannot read his prenatal experience. And this blankness is not that there were at the time no senses and no external environment impinging on them. But the clear reason is: Memory (of experience) had not formed yet - - it takes evidently a minimum living span to collect the needed quantum of sensual experience (albeit instinctively) and their interactions for the formation of a Memory. And no Memory, no Mind. And no Mind, no Ego; for as we have seen, mind and ego are inseparable twins.

Conversely, if mind, memory and ego *were present* before birth in the babe, they would all - - as they do after every waking from every sleep - - reassert themselves fully again in the creature exactly with the same profiles and contours as before. The fact that this *does not* occur at birth proves again that Memory. Mind and Ego have to, and do, begin to shape from scratch only after the expulsion from the mother's womb of the babe - - hitherto *vatapattra śayana*<sup>2</sup>, the sole, sovereign Lord, floating blissfully in its Singleness in the sea of amniotic fluid. Only on its entry into a new environment of bewildering multiplicity the babe's enjoyment of serene indivisibility begins to be attacked and to break up to its own citadel of pitiful individuality.

If inherited Intelligence of the babe catalyses the forging

of its memory and mind with sensual experiences pouring into it relentlessly, the chance environment of its outer world plays no less a determined role in shaping the profile and content of its Mind, and therefore of its Ego.

No two environments being ever the same, the characteristics of no two mind-ego complexes can ever be the same - - not even of the identical twins. This accounts for the palpable differences in the sense of individuality binding and ruling every creature.

## **The State of the Newborn**

The newborn babe, before its mind-ego formation, we can imagine, is in precisely the same state of existence as we are in deep, dreamless sleep - - alive but blissfully free of the mind-ego. This is the state of unalloyed *Self-awareness* and absence of *self-consciousness*.

This state of the cherubim is deluged without let with sensual experiences from its own particular environment. This stream, filling the empty pot (potential) of mind, creates simultaneously Memory, Mind and Ego. Hardly has the gyani born completed the first year of life, his limitless divine Self-awareness is, willy nilly, overwhelmed by a pitiful little self-consciousness, like an enormous uncut diamond powdered into smithereens and each tiny particle, in its ignorance, posing proud as a separate, distinctive individual. And the tragic-comic part of the fall is his all-but-inerasable delusion that he, as the ego stamped with death, is superior and preferable to the immortal SELF of which he is but a flying spark.

The upshot of this gross misconception is the tireless struggle of the individual to survive endlessly as *such*, as futile as it is pathetic, blind to his heritage of blissful immortality.

Maandookya, putting us wise, logically, and therefore convincingly, to the Reality, enables the sadhak to complete the cycle back to the gyana of the newborn babe. The sooner he is able to achieve it, the sooner he is free from the machinations of the ego-pretender, attains the Light, and becomes the *sthitaprajña*, ever anchored is SELF-awareness, awakes asleep.



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1. *Sthitaprajña* : One who has realized Brahman, the Reality, the SELF, the Atman, who is always anchored in Atman-awareness.
  2. *vatapattra śayana* : As per Hindu mythology the Almighty lay, before Creation, blissfully on a banyan leaf on the lap of infinity.



## GLOSSARY

*acintaniyam* : the unthinkable. That beyond thought.

advaita : unitary concept of Hindu philosophy.

agyani : the unenlightened.

*anirvacaniyam* : (with capital 'A' pronounced as Aatman) stands for the intuitive experience of metaphysical Reality. (See Brahman also).

Aum : (with capital 'A') is a vocal symbol for the metaphysical Reality, in Vedanta. Every sacred utterance and performance are initiated and terminated with the chant of Aum.

Aumkaara : intoned chant of Aum.

*avarnaniyam* : the indescribable.

Awareness : (See Appendix I)

Bhagavad Geetaa : A well-known Hindu scripture.

Brahmaa : One of the Hindu Trinity.

Brahman : (with capital 'B') stands for absolute metaphysical Reality when viewed objectively for purpose of communication. The impersonal God in English language corresponds to Brahman.

the Brahma sootra : the authoritative work of aphorisms about Brahman (Reality).

Chhandogya Upanishad : one of the eleven major upanishads.

Coleridge : (Samuel Taylor Coleridge) an English poet of

nineteenth century.

Consciousness : (See Appendix I)

Ego : cannotes the individual mind-consciousness which every organism invariably feels that it has a distinct exclusive existence of its own (-- jivātmā)

Gaudapada : the earliest known commentator of Maandookya.

gyana : (pronounced as gyaana) enlightenment in respect of metaphysical Reality.

gyani : (pronounced as gyaani) the enlightened one

Hanuman : a heroic character in Ramaayana, a Hindu epic

Karika : (pronounced as kaarika) gloss.

Kekule : a classical German chemist.

kevala : not connected with anything else, the Absolute.

Lord Krishna : a central figure in Hindu mythology.

Kubla Khan : a poem by Coleridge.

mantra : (plural, mantras), in the context of this Upanishad is the statement of philosophic content.

mātrā : a syllable

mātrās : syllables

māyā : illusion

Onkāra : Aumkaara

pāda : a foot, a step, a quarter, a fourth part.

*parama* : the most excellent, the supreme. the ultimate.

Partha : (Pronounced as Paartha), Arjuna, one of the Pandavas, a major characters in Mahabharata. a Hindu epic.

Praagya, *prājñā* : is the name given to experience in the state of deep sleep, or in other words whole and sole experience obtained in Sushupti, which is pure, whole, secondless, ego-free.

*prajñānaghana* : consciousness congealed.

*pranava* : a synonym for Aumkaara.

Ramakrishna : a realized Hindu saint of the 19th century, who inspired the Ramakrishna Mission.

Ramana : a realized soul of the 20th century, the inspiration for the Ramana Movement.

Reality : (with capital 'R') is the ubiquitous, imperishable, cosmic Principle, whence everything evolves, by which everything is sustained, and wherein everything dissolves into Unity. Synonymous with the Atman, the Absolute, the Ultimate, the Fundamental Truth, Self-awareness, God, and so on.

Sadhak : an aspirant after Reality.

Sadhakas : aspirants after Reality.

Santa Claus : a mythical figure of Christianity.

*śānti* : peace, serenity.

*sarveśvara* : overlord of all

*sat* : Existence Absolute

*satchidānanda* : the Self or SELF : corresponds to the

Sanskrit term, the Atman. To distinguish it from the 'self' (the ego), it has been spelt with capital 'S' and preceded by the article 'the'.

Sushupti, *suśuptasthāna* : is the state of deep sleep (the inferred state experience)

Shankara : a well-known Hindu philosopher and sage.

*swabhāva* : born nature.

Taijasa, *taijasa* : is the name given to all that which is experienced in the dream state by the ego, including itself.

tanpura : (pronounced as taanpooraa) : a stringed instrument in the background in Indian music for keeping the song in tune.

Tureeya : literally means the fourth. In Vedanta it stands for the Reality and is identified with the Reality - and is identified with the state of ITS realization

*upanishad* : (an aphoristic composition concerned with Reality - - *upanishadic adj* - - where 'up' is a preposition or prefix to verbs or nouns expressing) towards, near to, by the side of.

Vaishwanara, *vaiśwānara* : is the name given to all which is experienced by the ego including itself in the waking state.

Vedanta : (pronounced as Vedaanta), the philosophy enshrined in the Vedas; the core or the essence or the ultimate goal of Veda - - Vedantic, adj.

Vyasa : (pronounced as Vyaasa), the codifier of the Vedas, the author of Mahabharata, etc.

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